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PAPERS
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A

Shaker Tract

on the

Nativity of Jesus Christ,

in Connection with the divine Promise, that the Seed of the Woman should bruise the Serpent's Head: How it was fulfilled in the first-born Son and Daughter of the New Creation.

By Russel Haskel.

Every plant that my heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up. Christ.

Enfield, Ct.
1878.

"And the Lord God said to the serpent, (or to the fallen angel, whatever form he may have assumed for the purpose of deception,) I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed: It (Heb. He) will bruise thy head, and thou (the serpent) wilt bruise his heel." (That is, the heel of the seed of the woman.) Genesis, Chap. 3, v. 15.

The word seed in our language has several meanings; one of which is offspring or descendents. In this sense the divine promise was fulfilled in Christ Jesus; who was the offspring of a woman, independent of a man, as the evangelists Matthew & Luke and the apostle Paul have testified. And in no other sense could it be applied to him with any show of reason or consistency. And yet we are not to suppose that the business of bruising was restricted to him alone, but included all his true followers, who assisted him. But reference is had to him in particular,

as being the first and most eminent, and the one to whom was committed the general care and direction of the whole work. It appears that in the production of Jesus, which was not by miracle or super-earthly power alone, but by miracle and providence combined, the era of supernatural births was ended.

The virgin Mary, when quite young, after being kept in the temple, for her protection from the snares of evil, was espoused to Joseph, who was a just man, and would not suffer her early vow of chastity to be broken, while it was in his power to prevent it; and of this she may have been assured by the angel. It appears that she was providentially espoused to Joseph, not for the purpose of raising up a family; but that she might have a watchful protector, such as her tender age

required, and not suffer the reproach of being an adulteress, & that her life might not be taken away by an enemy. That Joseph was a man advanced in years, and a widower, seems to have been the testimony of antiquity; and that those who were called the brethren and sisters of Jesus, were the posterity of Joseph by a former wife, or were german cousins. It is said, that the term brother, among the jewish people, was formerly used in a less restricted sense than with us. According to Cruden, it was applied not only to half-brothers but to first cousins. And when it is considered, that James the less, who was the son of Alpheus, was called the Lord's brother, and that, according to St. Mark, Mary the mother of James and Joses, (who were styled the brethren of Jesus,) was, at the time of the crucifixion, in the company that was afar off beholding, while the

virgin Mary stood by the cross; we are not warranted in concluding that she was the mother of any child but Jesus. And if she was not, there was no [redacted] intermingling of the two tribes (the tribe of Judah and the tribe of Levi) in consequence of the marriage. Altho Joseph was the husband of Mary, he was not the father of Jesus, except in a legal sense. And if she was of the tribe of Levi, how was Jesus the son of David? To this we may answer, That God was able, not only to turn water into wine, but thru such means as he might see fit to employ, could give to Jesus, if need be, a due proportion of all the peculiar traits pertaining to the house of David, so that he might in truth be styled the son of David. So let us believe in God, in his wisdom and in his power.x

When the time drew near for the dispensation of the Law and

x Judging from all accessible evidence, it seems fair to conclude, that Mary was a descendent of David

the Prophets to be endes; the angel Gabriel was sent, [redacted] to the virgin Mary with a message concerning the birth of the Messiah; stating in substance that it was to be accomplished by the power of God operating thru invisible agencies. By this means he was made to possess a strength and fortitude of mind proportioned to the greatness of the task that was assigned to him. It was thru the aforesaid agencies, in connection with what had previously been done, that he was made able to tread "the winepress alone," and would never yield to any temptation of the enemy, however severe. For if he had yielded, so far as to commit a sin, where would have been the Mediator, standing between him and the throne of God, that could have saved him from further yielding? Tho not superhuman, his eternal heavenly Parents doubtless intendes him to be such a character

thru Nathan, [redacted], on the father's side, and that her mother was sister to Elisabeth's mother, and of the tribe of Levi. See Heli in Smith's bible dictionary.

as would never consent to transgress.
Tho possessing an earthly body encumbered with fallen propensities, he was strong enough in faith & power to overcome & subdue them. Altho he took upon him not the nature of holy angels, but the [redacted] seed of Abraham, it was not in its worst or most degraded state, but far otherwise. (See Ezekiel, chap. 17, & the three last verses.) Altho there was a noticeable resemblance between him and his brethren, in that they all possessed the same sinful nature with its passions and temptations, yet we may well suppose that he was at least intellectually superior, and so created as to be a perfect medium of communication from spirits in eternity; that he might receive, unblemished by error, the infallible word of his heavenly Father. And as

he was always obedient to his teachings, (for he said, I do always those things that please him, and which of you convinceth me of sin?) a sure foundation was laid for man's eternal redemption.— Was he born a christian? Certianly not; nor was he born a jew in religion. But I am persuaded, that at a very early age, the elements of eternal life, gospel faith and love, were implanted in his soul, [illegible] and operated like leaven, till his redemption was complete. I think that in his childhood he received, like other children, (only perhaps at an earlier age,) an understanding of the difference between good & evil, without interfering with free ageney, and was providentially kept from falling into sin, until old enough to receive the faith of the gospel, which was given him by his heavenly Father, and was sufficently strong and powerful to protect him ever afterwards. But by no means was he pro-

tected without his own best exertions: for "in the days of his flesh, when he had offered up prayers, with strong crying, unto him who was able to save him from death, was heard in that he feared." And perhaps it would not be too much to say, that he was exercised with the true fear of God, to such an extent as to watch himself continually, lest the adversary should throw into his mind some vile insinuation, and induce him to transgress, either in thought, word or deed. But by withstanding every temptation at the first presentment, he was always able to overcome; and by so doing, set a pure example for every child of God to follow. "I will divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he hath poured out his soul unto death." (Isaiah, chap. 53.) The [redacted] honor conferred upon him, by the God of heaven, was justly earned by his extreme faithfulness. And we,

by pursuing the same path, (tho our travail be slower,) shall finally be redeemed from our loss, and dwell with him in mansions of endless glory. Thru deep tribulation & sufferings of soul he arose out of spiritual death, (a depraved nature,) into the heavenly element of life and peace; and thus opened the door for all others who, according to their measure, would endure the same cross: ~~that him they~~ find access to heaven. Was he divine? Certainly he was; he became so by a progressive travail: and we must become so, or never go where he has gone. Having been made partakers of the divine nature, by receiving the faith of the gospel, and conforming our lives to that standard; it is our duty and privilege to increase therein, until it permeates our whole being. A small vessel filled with the divine life or element, is as really divine as one that is larger, and is equally acceptable in its place.

It was not necessary that the

supernatural means by which Jesus was brought forth, ~~should~~, should be enacted over again in regard to the female Messiah; for that would not have been a true order of progress: it would have indicated another new creation and an independent headship. Therefore she was brought into the world providentially: by that providence which brings to pass every purpose of the Most High at the right time and place.* And the same foundation principles of the gospel law that existed in Jesus when personally on earth, were revealed to Ann, attended with an increase in the internal spiritual power of its ministration. For when the first-born Daughter was placed in her correspondent relation to the Son, better conditions began to be furnished, than had ever been before. The invisible heavenly powers waited for the manifestation of the visible; that God's work might proceed in its true line. But Jesus Christ, being the first gospel

(*I saw the child of promise, ~~come~~ came into existence in part by a supernatural or spirit power, enough so for a figure; but Rebecca did not.)

parent, and not dependent on a visible lead, could gain his redemption in the first gospel day.

The dispensations which preceded the christian, were generative: hence it was then, that we might reasonably look for miracles in that line, to subserve the good and noble intentions of providence. And as Jesus was destined to be a far more spiritual personage than had before appeared in the world, it was necessary that the miraculous power for his production, should extend to the highest point that could be needful, even to the entire rejection of the earthly order; thus showing, that in him and his kingdom, which would endure forever, generation would be wholly excluded, being superseded by regeneration and the new birth; in which it might seem reasonable to expect, there would be miracles of a spiritual nature, for the benefit of the soul.

If Jesus ~~had~~ had advantages that we do not possess, we have advantages of another kind. If overtaken in a fault, or any serious offense, there are elders to whom we can find access, and be restored. And we are spiritually strengthened in consequence of being joined to the true vine: for the regenerating work of the Spirit has respect to souls in a united capacity. As Christ said, "Every branch in me that beareth fruit, he (the husbandman) pruneth it, that it may bring forth more fruit. If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered." This is the condition of those who cut themselves off, or lose their union to Christ's people. Even if they should then strive to combat the adversary in themselves, they would be too weak to gain a full conquest; for God has respect to his own order.

The position, spiritually considered, in which Ann Lee (the female Messiah) was placed, was quite different from that

of Jesus. She was left to fall into the work of generation and into some ordinary sins; not gross immoralities, which would have unfitted her for standing in the lot she was afterwards called to fill. And this was done, that she might lead in setting the example of confessing & repenting of sin, and following the Lamb in the regeneration. For what was wanting in the example of the first foundation pillar, was to be consummated in the second. The society under the ministration of James and Jane Wardley, which possessed a spiritual power equal at least to what was in the gentile primitive church, was sufficent to initiate souls into the gospel, thru confession, repentance and remission of sins; but could not lead to final redemption, because it was not the fullness. What mother Ann received from this society, she called the gospel, and blest the day when she set out to obey it. Thru severe sufferings of soul and

earnest cries to God, she was blessed, in the summer of 1770, with the full manifestation of Christ for the first stage of his work in this day of his second appearing. From that time forward she was the acknowledged Leader of the Society. The church of Christ being established in the spiritual world, there could be a ministration from it to this world, thru an angelic medium, to form the Wardley society, and also for the spiritual strength & support of mother Ann, during her severe trials & sufferings: for she uniformly acknowledged that Christ Jesus was her helper. Thus we may see, that altho there was a degree of resemblance between the two appearings of the Son of man, the attendant circumstances were necessarily quite different. For the Kingdom of Heaven, which in its beginning was like a grain of mustard seed, had its planting in Jesus when in

the earthly tabernacle, and there was no church in the spiritual world, from which support could be drawn.

But it is time to enquire, what was figuratively represented by the serpent, whose head was to be bruised, and how the bruising was to be effected. The serpent was ~~an agent~~ of the ~~[illegible]~~ mighty power of evil, ~~and~~ represented human nature, after it had become serpentine, by yielding to his ~~serpents~~ vile insinuations. What then could be the head of the serpent, but the ruling power in human depravity? and what can this ruling power be, but the carnal or sensual ~~[illegible]~~ mind, which was received from the serpent, and which is enmity against God? And if this is the head of the serpent, how is it to be bruised, unless by the mortification brought upon it by bearing the cross of Christ? This mortification causes suffering, and was the most important part of the sufferings of Christ. And if our sufferings of soul are not in conformity with his, how can we reign with him in glory?

For he that doth not bear his cross and come after me, said Jesus, cannot be my disciple. This cross against all the desires of the carnal mind, will resurrect the soul from the element of nature into the heavenly element of everlasting life.

The next question to be considered, is, how the divine prophecy was fulfilled in bruising the heel of the seed of the woman. For the Lord said, "Thou (the serpent) wilt bruise his heel." As a human being consists of an immortal spirit combined with a mortal body, and as the mortal part is lowest in point of dignity or eminence, so the heel occupies the lowest place in the back part of the material body, and figuratively represents the animal frame or the lowest part of humanity. The mortal part in Jesus was pierced with thorns, scourged & crucified. And many of his followers endured cruel deaths at the hands of their persecutors, who were acting under the malignant in-

fluence of the serpentine nature. What was this but bruising the heel? for they could not hurt the immortal spirit.

Now let us consider how the divine promise or prophecy was to be applied to the female Messiah or first-born Daughter in the new creation of God. The term "seed of the woman," when applied to the first-born Daughter, has to be understood in its figurative & spiritual meaning, as it was used by Jesus in the parable of the sower. "The seed (he said) is the word of God:" it was the gospel testimony that Christ and his disciples sowed, by proclaiming it as the living word, and exhibiting its effects in their daily life. (1 Pet. 1: 23-25) It could not however in that day be called the seed of the woman. But in this last dispensation of the gospel, it can justly be applied to the first spiritually born woman, who had not before appeared. Altho the seed, word of God, or gospel testimony, dwells in every

true cross-bearer, yet it may be called her seed, because she led the way in sowing it, as she was commissioned to do. In the like sense a victory or a defeat of an army in battle, is ascribed to the chief commander. It was in consequence of her mortifying testimony against the iniquities of mankind, that tumultuous mobs were raised against her; and it seemed that her life would have been taken away, if divine providence had not interposed for her preservation. This in a figurative sense was bruising the heel; and was also the fulfillment of the saying, "I will put enmity between thee (the serpent) and the woman." And as her followers her spiritual children, often shared with her in the cruel abuse, the latter part of the Lord's saying was fulfilled, which was, "I will put enmity between thy seed and her seed." As her spiritual offspring (her children in the Spirit) bore the same testimony that she did, they also became objects of persecution, which was however the most intensely leveled against the mother. The phrase seed of the serpent, is applicable to those who acted under the influence & control of the carnal serpentine mind. The phrase seed of the woman, is not only applied to the gospel testimony that she sowed, but it also applies to her spiritual offspring. Hence it was declared in the book of Revelations, the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, who keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.

That the last dispensation of the gospel, or the sounding of the last trump, should be by a woman, is evident, both from scripture and the analogy that the earthly & visible creation bears to the spiritual. "For the invisible things of God from the creation of the world, are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made; even his eternal power & Godhead." And as Jesus, by the quickening spirit manifested thru him, was constituted the second Adam, of whom the first was a figure; so there must be a second Eve, to render the analogy complete. And who could this second Eve be, but the woman who could rightfully claim the leadership in the second revelation of the spirit of Christ, as Jesus did in the first? that there might be a first spiritual woman on earth and in heaven, as well as a first man, when the fullness of time should arrive for that purpose. And as in the creation of the first earthly man, who was created male and female, (the elements of two in one,) a foundation was laid for the separate existence of Eve, in accordance with th

true law of progression; [redacted] so by the first appearing of the Christ, which was in the order of the male, a foundation was laid for the [redacted] second manifestation of the Spirit, in the order of the female; at same feature [redacted] period. He who then had the bride, in spirit, was the Bridegroom. This is a law of progress, which was indicated in the beginning by the creation of land and water; which were created together, and the separation of one from the other, & the existence destined of each in its place, was an after process, and in another day.

The apostle Paul said, that the woman is the glory of the man, and that the one is not without the other in the Lord; and that the man is the head of the woman, &c. They were so created, as to be mutual and necessary helps to each other: the one supplying what is wanting in the other, and thus making humanity complete: exhibiting, in a limited degree, the wisdom and glory of the Creator.

First the parental spiritual man in the new creation, and after that the woman

in a corresponding relationship; first the jewish nation, and then the gentiles, was the order of the spiritual work of God upon earth. Christ was first manifested among God's covenant people the jews, who were called of God to be the leading nation, the head; and his second coming was to take place in the leading gentile nation, which providence had designed should be the most enlightened, and which should be, all things considered, the best qualified for disseminating the truths of the everlasting gospel to the ends of the earth. And which of the nations could this be, but England, (including her descendents in America,) which in the spirit of prophecy might have been denominated Tyre, on account of her resemblance to [redacted] the Tyre of the ancients, which was distinguished for her learning, wealth and commercial [redacted]. It should be borne in mind, that in the prophecies relating to a future dispensation of divine grace to mortals, there is for the most part, a mixture of clearness and obscurity; that they might be but imperfectly understood, before the time of their fulfillment: Less they should be or seem to be

the cause of their being fulfilled, instead of showing, at some future day, the previous designs of providence, and the knowledge possessed by the divine mind from the beginning. Had it been known, long before the event, that the last dispensation of the gospel would be ushered into the world by a woman, how many imposters would have arose, each ~~claiming~~ taking undue advantage of the prophecies, and claiming to be the chosen one; even as there were false Christs after the appearance of the one whom God had sent. And Herod, taking advantage of the prophetic declaration, that Bethlehem was to be the place of his birth, ~~sent, and~~ caused the infants to be slain, that were two years old & under. The prophecy was so literal, it was understood by the chief priests & scribes.

Jesus said, in relation to his second advent, "If the goodman (master) of the house had known in what hour the thief would come, he would have watched, and not suffered his house to be broken up." He also spake of some one, a true and faithful servant, who would be found watching and waiting for his lord's return. He said, the servant that is so wise,

(Here's something worth observing,)

Should be the ruler of his house,
And he himself would serve him?"*

This was fulfilled in Ann Lee of Manchester, England: in her the full revelation of Christ commenced. She was the anointed one, in whom Christ made his second appearance without sin unto salvation, to bring in everlasting righteousness and peace. This ~~was his coming appearance was~~ coming in spirit; even as the second ~~appearance~~ coming of the prophet Elijah, was in John the baptist, who came in the spirit and power of that prophet. Jesus said that he should come in his own glory. His second coming in the line of the female, was the glory of his first coming, and was sometimes referred to as being a revelation. "Hope to the end, (said the apostle Peter,) for the grace that is to be be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ." He was to be revealed in flaming fire: the fire of gospel truth against the sins & corruptions of earth's inhabitants. The Spirit, speaking by king David in the 45th psalm, said, "On thy right hand did stand the Queen in gold of Ophir. Hearken, O Daughter, and consider, and incline thine ear; forget also thine own

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* Where the sex is unknown, ~~which~~ doubtless in this case was intended to be, the masculine pronoun is used.

people and thy father's house. This was almost literally fulfilled, in the Daughter Ann, by leaving her father's house in England, and with a small company of followers, sailing to America in 1774; that the true christian church of the latter day might be permanently seated in this american land of freedom. The character of her followers is briefly mentioned in the prophecy, as virgin. "The virgins, her companions that follow her, shall be brought unto thee; with gladness and rejoicing shall they be brought, and shall enter into the ~~king's~~ King's palace." There is an additional prophecy on this subject, which can be found in the book of Revelations, chap. 12th, verse 14th. "To the woman were given two wings, as of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness, into her place, where she is nourished for a time and times and half a time, from the face of the serpent." Mother and her little company, after their arrival on the american shore, finally settled in the wilderness of Niskeyna, (now Watervliet,) Sept. 1776. Here they held their solemn meetings for divine worship, and enjoyed their religion in quietness, during a time, times & half a time; (three

years and a half) until the gospel testimony of Christs second appearing began to be proclaimed by those witnesses of truth, in March, 1780. Until near that time, the preparatory work of the Spirit in the state of New York & the new england states, was not brought to a close.

"The Lord seeth not as man seeth." When Jesus, after his crucifision, appeared to his disciples, he did not, as we should naturally have supposed, first appear to one or more of the apostles; they were put as it were upon the back ground. He appeared first to Mary Magdalene; and she with the women that accompanied her carried the news of his resurrection (reappearance) to the apostles, who were slow to believe. This seems to have been a preintimation, that in the fourth and last dispensation of God's grace, a woman would be chosen in the order of providence, to whom Christ would be revealed, and who would be called to lead the way in the ministration of the everlasting gospel to mankind; and who, in a subordinate and figurative sense, would be the mother of all the children of the new creation, even as Jesus Christ is the father. The real Mother is the eternal mother Spirit in Deity: that

Spirit that was figuratively represented by a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet.) For the time was coming, when the female part of the human family, as well as the male, would be placed in their lot & order in the church, corresponding with that of the brotherhood.

"No mighty warrior, no not one,
No man of high renown,
Who could the man of sin dethrone,
Or rend his kingdom down.
But lo, a woman God did choose,
The female was the one,
That first proclaim'd the joyful news,
And made his purpose known."

"She saw the loss mankind were in,
By nature how depraved!
She show'd the root and seat of sin,
And how we might be sav'd.
And in the pow'r and gift of God
She taught the living way:
The self-denying path she trod,
And many did obey."

"When first we heard the gospel sound,
Our Mothers voice did echo round:
Confess your sins, she loudly cried
Or else you never can abide."

She said, that "They who honestly confess all their sins, with a full determination to forsake them forever, will find strength of God to forsake them. And by taking up their crosses against every known sin, and following Christ in the regeneration, in that life of obedience, they will be clothed with the righteousness of Christ, and become the sons & daughters of God; being heirs of God, and joint heirs with Jesus Christ."

Her testimony was against fighting with carnal weapons; against estrife and contention, dishonesty, intemperance, profanity, unchartableness, indolence, covetousness, wastefulness & extravagance, or using this world as abusing it. She taught the believers to live as chaste virgins, devoted to the service of God. To live in peace, love and harmony one with another, so far as they were able. In short, to pursue & practice every gospel virtue, after the example of the Savior.

For particulars concerning the life, sufferings, prophecies and doctrine of mother and the first elders, the reader is referred to a book, entitled Millenial Church: published by the shakers at New Lebanon N. Y.

The End.

SHAKER COLLECTION

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